La Grange, Fayette Co.
Texas. Feb. 21st/53

Dear Brethren:

The time is hastening on, when a part of your Number are to go forth & Engage in the great work of preaching the Gospel: and the question has been already asked by some, where shall I go? What part of the Lord's vineyard shall I occupy? The call comes from the For. field! & a voice is also heard pleading from the Dom. field! Whither shall my steps be directed? – Some of your Number have perhaps already decided the question – others are in doubt, not knowing in which field to engage. Hoping & praying that some of your Number may be directed to Texas! I shall Endeavor to give you an idea of this great & important field. Texas is a *new*, but growing State – here are met, persons from every State in the Union – but *not* as many suppose – Refugees from Justice &c but the very best of Citizens – Men of talent – Education & wealth. Hence the State of Society here is very different from what is generally supposed, & Strangers are surprised to see so much refinement, and general intelligence. A Spirit of improvement is manifested, to a degree that is flattering & Encouraging – & as Education & morality are advancing, Religion also is fast gaining the ascendency. Our Methodist & Baptist brethren have done & are still doing a great work: – but Our Church has been negligent & the field has been occupied: but the people are already satisfied with the *ranters* that have in times past overrun the State and now wish preachers of a more refined & Educated Character

Hence *Presbyterianism* is becoming very popular – And is soon destined to stand pre-Eminent in Texas. Now Brethren, *here is a field*, worthy in every respect of your Notice – a field that demands immediate attention. Our State Embraces An area of 223.000 square Miles, and a population now of about 400.000 & increasing at the rate of 150.000 per year, And Among these thousands we have but *one* Synod – Embracing *three* Presbyteries, Composed of *25 Ministers* – of Whom but 15 according to Minutes of *G. assembly* – are regularly in the work – the remaining 10 – agents – teachers or without Charge – Yes! only 15 Ministers in Texas When now 50 Could be Employed –. A few of these have one charge – Most of them have several – & many of our Churches never hear a Presbyterian Sermon for months. The people Are willing & *able* to support the Gospel & All we want, is *the Men* to supply these places. But a few days ago Dr. Baker named some 15 Churches now vacant Entirely; *Some* have buildings Erected & other denominations occupying them *others* having only organizations. In short the field here, *is the State*! And Brethren, if you will only Come, we will find you work, And a Comfortable support. The Texians are a noble, generous hearted people, & they will receive you with open Arms – & welcome you to their homes & Churches Their Kindness & hospitality is proverbial & will Exceed your highest expectations: such attentions touch a tender chord in the Missionaries heart & Amply reward him for All his privations. Here we ask not ourselves, How shall I excel my Brother in preaching as a Candidate & thus receive a Call: but the point is this – which field is the Most important & demands attention? & in wh. shall I be able to do the Most good & promote the Cause of Christ?

But as this is a distant field, it is necessary for those Entering upon it — *First* — to secure the *Co-operation* and *aid* of the Board of Dom. Missions; they are then supported until settled. *This is necessary.* They then have time to visit the fields & secure the Most important. And I might remark here, that the *privations* of Texas, are too often Magnified — & thus young Men are deterred from Coming to the field. But, Brethren, in the Language of Dr. Baker, you Must not Come Expecting to find "*feathered nests*" — but you *will* find even better than these, you will find the *rude Nest* and plenty of Materials to feather it just to your Mind, & What more do you wish? I do not say, that there are no *privations* to be endured, or no *labor* to be performed in this field — but I do assert, & my Experience thus far Corroborates the assertion, that Men Can live as happily & Enjoy as Many privileges in Texas, as in Many of the boasted Churches in the old States. I admit, that there are fields here, that would require great self-denial & privation & hard labor, & its important to occupy them, but there are so Many *important* fields Now vacant in our flourishing & rapidly increasing villages, that *all who will Come*, Can find Comfortable locations: Where flourishing Churches Can, by the blessing of God be rapidly built up. Our Churches are generally small in Membership the Call being so great, we have several points of preaching: for Example — I expect to preach twice a Month in LaGrange — once 15 Miles distant, & once 35 Miles. And in performing this labor we often have Muddy roads & swimming Creeks, but this does not last over two Months & is a Natural Consequence Everywhere. The Missionary in Texas, as in all New states, Must Expect labor, & often self-denial — but here his heart is cheered by respectable & attentive Audiences; for Texians can appreciate a good sermon, whether it be read or delivered extemporaneously: and both methods are pursued - so that need be no barrier - however the off hand method is most popular - & certainly is most suitable to frontier life. Brethren; we need Efficient Men - those who are willing to labor & if need be, to endure privation, we need here pious - energetic men - & with such our Church will be blessed - & Texas will yet become Presbyterian. Come then - Oh! Come & help us in this great work. It would fill my heart with joy to take you, by the hand, & welcome you to our "lone star State". Then Come & help us. As regards the Climate - it is delightful! In the winter season generally about two months that is wet & muddy & occasionally cold for a few hours, the remainder is pleasant. The Health of Texas, generally is good, & by care & precaution health may be as good here as in the old states, at least no reason why it should not be -; for the Land, except along the Coast, is rolling & often hilly - water is pure & running springs - fruit in abundance, except apples & cherries - always in summer cool breeze - in short, good society - plenty to eat & plenty to wear. The fall is proper time to come from the Sem.y & then no danger. Ministers are generally from Princeton - Bro. M. I. Wallace of the class of /52 is now in Eastern Texas - & I am in Middle Texas. Bring good supply of clothes as they are much cheaper in the North, have some warm clothes. You may perhaps have no field in view when you start on the journey, but the Brethren in Galveston & Houston will be able to direct you, after arriving. Get blank Commissions from the Board of Missions & have them filled out here -, & if possible be ordained. My prayer is, in conclusion, that God may direct some of you to this state.

Your Bro. in the Gospel of Christ. R. F. Bunting -

I never enjoyed better health than in Texas.